

# PULVERTAFT PAPERS

A Newsletter on the Pulvertofts & Pulvertafts

*Published by Rear Admiral D.M.Pulvertaft  
Tucketts, Trusham, Newton Abbot, TQ13 0NR.*

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Vol 4

December 2004

No 9

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## EDITORIAL

As this is the penultimate issue of Volume 4, I ask myself as editor whether I should embark on Volume 5 – with a commitment of another ten years of newsletters – or should we call it a day and use 21<sup>st</sup> century methods to keep the record alive?

My own feeling is that, while *Pulvertaft Papers* have been wonderful in recording details of the Pulvertoft and Pulvertaft families as they have emerged over 25 years and have served as an easy form of communications between the generations, new material is thin and I doubt whether there will be enough to fill the pages for ten more years. If any reader wants to prove me wrong, please feel free to become the editor/publisher and I will pass the format and address list to you!

What I believe would serve us better would be a web site under the Pulvertoft/Pulvertaft names where details of the family could be lodged and any new information added on a periodic basis. If this were set up during 2005, details could be announced in the final issue and the archive would not die. Please let me know your thoughts.

## THE NEW YORK CONNECTION

In September this year Mary Rose and I booked a short holiday in New York City. This was not intended as a family history event as my searches in the census returns of USA had suggested that the Pulvertafts of New York had either died out or moved away many years ago. We simply wanted to explore and enjoy the city of which we had heard and read so much.

I must admit that, in preparing for the visit, I had looked up the Ellis Island web site [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) that lists the 22 million immigrants who passed through New York between 1892 and 1924, just in case we needed to add it to our itinerary! There was only one Pulvertaft entry and this recorded that **Mary Anne Pulvertaft** was 39 when she arrived from Cork, Ireland in 1920. As Mary Anne (M25Q) is referred to in several places in Pulvertaft Papers and is included in the Modern Pulvertaft Family Tree (Vol 3, No 7), family history was put on the back burner for the visit.

Ten days before we flew out from London Heathrow, all this changed with the arrival of a letter from Kyoto University in Japan! It was written by the Professor of Lifeline Engineering – Charles Scawthorn – who explained that he had researched his family history, including his maternal grandmother – Mary Agnes Pulvertaft (born in Brooklyn in 1890) – and had come across *Pulvertaft Papers* in Copenhagen through Christopher Pulvertaft (M52S)!

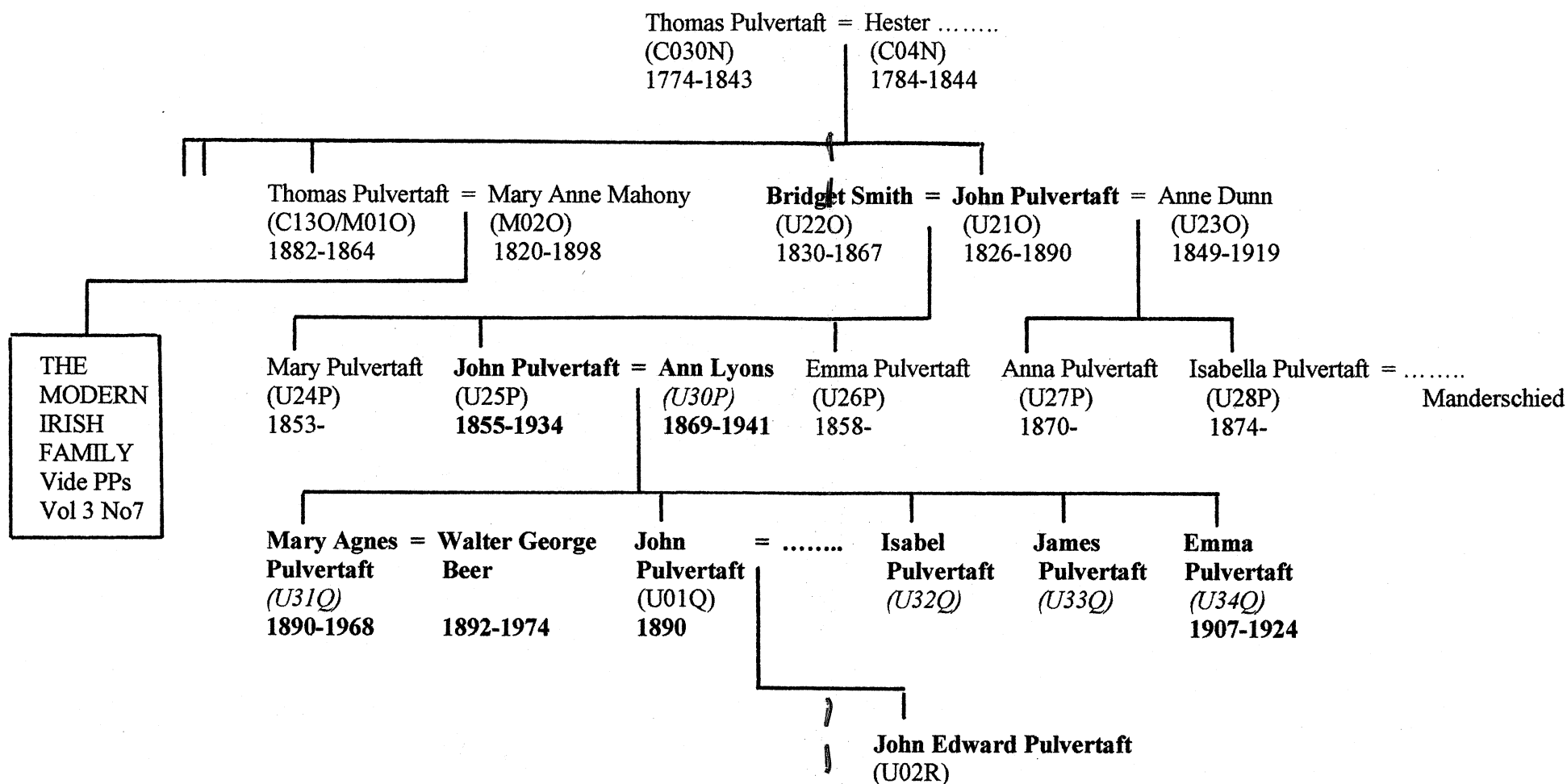
Charles Scawthorn went on to say that he was coming to the UK for a Cambridge University workshop and wondered if he could pop down to Devon to meet me! The odds on my being in New York while he was in the UK must have been very small but, when I told him that this was why we could not welcome him to Trusham, he said “Never mind, you will be able to meet my ‘Uncle George’ of Staten Island and that should interest you as it was his *mother* who was the Mary Agnes Pulvertaft!” And so it transpired. ‘Uncle George’ – or to give him his proper name – Wilder George Beer – gave us a delicious dinner and told us about his family.

He was born in 1931, the youngest of four children of George Walter Beer and Mary Agnes Pulvertaft. Mary Agnes was one of several children born to John Pulvertaft (born Newark NJ in 1855) and Annie Lyon. John Pulvertaft’s father was also called John and had been born in Ireland. One only has to look at the scrap pedigree drawn up from the US Federal Censuses of 1870 and 1880 - and printed on Volume 4, page 60 of these papers – to see that George Beer’s grandfather has already been identified as John (U25P) and his great-grandfather as John (U21O). Thus, the family of which he was speaking was that linked to the Pulvertafts of Cork on page 59 of the last issue!



Of course there were photographs too! This one shows John Pulvertaft and his daughter Mary Agnes in 1932 when John was 77. Charles Scawthorn has since forwarded the relevant part of his family tree and this is shown in **Bold** print overleaf with other details added from the records already published in *Pulvertaft Papers*.

# THE IRISH / UNITED STATES CONNECTION



- Note: 1. Details shown in **Bold** are either from a family tree supplied by Charles Scawthorn or from the memory of his uncle, George Beer.  
2. Identification codes shown in *Italics* are new ones.

With the family tree came a fascinating Certificate of Baptism for John Pulvertaft (U25P). It records that he was the son of John Pulvertaft and Bridget Smith, born on 21 March 1855 and baptised "According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church" at St Patrick's Cathedral, Newark, New Jersey on 17 December 1866.

As the Pulvertaft family in Cork were a Protestant and not a Roman Catholic family, this would suggest that Bridget Smith was a Catholic, but why did she and her husband John not baptise their son until he was eleven years old? Bridget's Death Certificate is amongst the papers relating to the widow's pension of John's second wife, Ann Dunn. This shows that Bridget died on 21 January 1867, that is five weeks after her son, John, had his late baptism. Was it, perhaps, that she knew that she was dying and wanted to set her house in order? Could it be that her other children, Mary (U24P) and Emma (U26P) were baptised at the same time? The records may tell us.

Another interesting thing that George Beer said was that his mother, Mary Agnes, had several siblings, some of whom died in the influenza pandemic during the First World War. However, a brother did survive, John Pulvertaft, a longshoreman in New York who later founded a successful Staten Island company called "Loaders". More importantly, he said that Uncle John had a son, John Edward Pulvertaft. These are clearly the individuals shown from the 1930 United States Federal Census on page 61 of Vol. 4 and named on page 76 of Vol. 3 at the head of Gary Pulvertaft's family tree.

It seems like only yesterday that Gary Pulvertaft wrote from Tucson, Arizona – but I see from my files that it was at the end of 1995. He introduced a group of Pulvertafts scattered over the USA who had not known that there were any other Pulvertafts in existence. Their earliest forebear was John Edward Pulvertaft who had been born in about 1890. I was not able to make the absolute connection at the time but, with the information provided by George Beer and Charles Scawthorn, the assumptions are confirmed and I think we can say with confidence that all the known living individuals with the Pulvertaft name can be shown on one family tree!

## NOTES & QUERIES

### Pulvertaft properties in Cork city

I am indebted to Peggy Leonard, daughter of Margaret Eleanor Pulvertaft (M26Q), for forwarding a cutting from the property section of the *Irish Examiner* of 8 May 2004. It reported that the five-bedroom house named "Balmoral" on Victoria Road was for sale with a guide price of €525,000.



The article records that:

*Victoria Road is an urban strip where many houses carry in their names memories of British rule – and Balmoral, a house on this mini-Royal Mile, continues the Empire Tradition.*

*This house dating to 1898, was one of three built by local merchant Robert Pulvertaft for his daughters. This Victoria Road home is a good representative of the Victorian era, and quite a showpiece of the genre. From here, it is a 10 minute walk to the city centre, and the house is close to the river and the Marina.*

*Robert Pulvertaft's daughter and her husband, the Rev Canon Watts, were the initial occupants of the house. In turn, it was owned by the Kilgrew family, the well known Cork retailers – whose name was on every child's lips – and who sold everything from prams to train sets.*

Peggy Leonard corrects the article in that Sidney Watts, son-in-law of Robert Pulvertaft, was not a clergyman but a commercial traveller! Both of his sons, however, were Canons!

As the article says, Robert had several houses built in Cork and in his will of September 1918 he left “my interest in my dwelling house known as ‘Windsor’ situate Victoria Road” to his daughter, Isabella Martha McLean. ‘Balmoral’ went to his daughter, Mary Anne Watts, while ‘Osborne’ went to Eileen Maud Musgrave. His own house ‘Victoria Ville’ he left to his wife and another ‘Bellmont’ in trust for his wife. He obviously had an eye for the future as all these properties were in Victoria Road.

### Your Last Chance!

Should any reader wish to make a final contribution to, or comment on these papers, this is your last chance!

In the meantime, “Happy Christmas”.

D.M.P.